

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION NEA-11

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11
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-----025698 051239Z /50

R 050950Z MAY 78
FM AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1917
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
INFO AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
AMEMBASSY KABUL
AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

S E C R E T KATHMANDU 2367

WE ARE REPEATING KATHMANDU 2328 AT SUGGESTION OF EMBASSY KABUL WITH
THE CONCURRENCE OF EMBASSY NEW DELHI.

FOLLOWING SENT ACTION KABUL INFO NEW DELHI, ISLAMABAD DATED 3 MAY
QUOTE
S E C R E T KATHMANDU 2328

FOR AMBASSADOR

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: PEPR, PINS, AF, IN
SUBJECT: DISCUSSION WITH INDIAN FOREIGN SECRETARY JAGAT MEHTA ON
AFGHANISTAN DEVELOPMENTS

1. I SAW FOREIGN SECRETARY MEHTA LAST EVENING (MAY 2) DURING
WHICH WE DISCUSSED AFGHAN COUP AND SOME OF IMPLICATIONS THEREOF
AS SEEN BY MEHTA. MEHTA, HAVING JUST RETURNED FROM A MEMORIAL
SERVICE FOR A FOREIGN SERVICE COLLEAGUE, WAS TIRED AND DISTRACTED
AND WE HAD PLANNED TO MEET FOR 15 MINUTES, BUT TYPICALLY ONCE
HE GOT GOING ON SUBJECT OF AFGHANISTAN HE BECAME DISCURSIVE
AND WE SPENT ABOUT AN HOUR TOGETHER.

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2. I STARTED BY GIVING HIM SOME OF ATMOSPHERICS OF COUP AND
THEN MADE THE POINTS YOU AND I HAD DISCUSSED BEFORE MY DEPARTURE
FROM KABUL, NAMELY THAT (A) NEW AFGHAN LEADERSHIP COMPRISED
HARD-LINE COMMUNISTS AND NOT RPT NOT "NATIONALISTS".

(B) COUP HAD OVERTURNED 100 YEARS OF EFFORT BY BRITISH AND OTHERS

TO KEEP AFGHANISTAN OUT OF SOVIET ORBIT. NOW THAT IT WAS A COMMUNIST STATE BORDERING ON SOVIET UNION, BREZHNEV DOCTRINE PRESUMABLY CAME INTO PLAY AND IT APPEARED VERY UNLIKELY THAT AFGHANISTAN WOULD BE ABLE TO BREAK AWAY IN FUTURE FROM ITS NEW ALIGNMENT. (C) THERE WAS ALREADY SOME EVIDENCE THAT NEW LEADERSHIP WOULD REVIVE PUSHTOONISTAN AND BALUCHISTAN ISSUES ONCE NEW GOVERNMENT HAD STABILIZED SITUATION WITHIN COUNTRY. I WENT ON TO SAY THAT ALL OF THIS RAISED IMPORTANT QUESTIONS FOR THE FUTURE ABOUT AREA STABILITY AND ROLE WHICH COUNTRIES OF SOUTH ASIA SHOULD PLAY IN CONTAINING THIS NEW THREAT. ONE OF CRITICAL PROBLEMS IN THIS CONNECTION WAS HOW THESE DEVELOPMENTS WOULD AFFECT PAKISTAN'S SECURITY AND STABILITY, AND INDIAN POLICIES IN AREA AND TOWARDS PAKISTAN.

3. MEHTA RESPONDED BY SAYING THAT HE AGREED WITH MY CHARACTERIZATION OF NEW AFGHAN LEADERSHIP AS HARDLINE COMMUNIST AND THAT CHANGE OF GOVERNMENT WAS INDEED A MOMENTOUS DEVELOPMENT NOT ONLY BECAUSE IT PLACED AFGHANISTAN UNDER SOVIET CONTROL BUT ALSO BECAUSE OF IMPLICATIONS FOR THE AREA. HE SAID THAT INDIA HAD DECIDED TO RECOGNIZE NEW GOVERNMENT EARLY ON LARGELY BECAUSE OF TRADITIONAL FRIENDSHIP BETWEEN TWO COUNTRIES. AS SOON AS HE HEARD THAT INDIAN AMBASSADOR SINGH HAD BEEN SUMMONED TO MEETING MAY 1 WITH TARAKKI, HE HAD INSTRUCTED SINGH TO INDICATE THAT GOI WAS PREPARED
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TO RECOGNIZE NEW REGIME. SINGH HAD REPORTED THAT MEETING HAD BEEN CORDIAL WITH TARAKKI GOING OUT OF HIS WAY TO BE FRIENDLY. MEHTA ADDED THAT IT WAS MUCH TOO EARLY TO COME TO ANY CONCLUSIONS ABOUT HOW AFGHAN-INDIAN RELATIONS MIGHT DEVELOP BUT CONCEIVABLY INDIA COULD PLAY A MODERATING ROLE OR AT LEAST PRESENT NON-COMMUNIST VIEWS INTO AFGHAN DILIBERATIONS. MEHTA WAS CLEARLY UNDER NO ILLUSIONS ABOUT HOW INFLUENTIAL INDIA MIGHT BE IN THE FUTURE AND MERELY POINTED OUT THAT TRADITIONAL INDIAN-AFGHAN FRIENDSHIP MIGHT COME IN USEFUL SOMEDAY.

4. TURNING TO MY EARLIER COMMENT ABOUT IMPLICATIONS FOR SOUTH ASIA OF AFGHAN COUP, MEHTA LAUNCHED INTO GENERAL COMMENTARY ABOUT RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN INDIAN FOREIGN POLICY. LOOKING BACK OVER THE LAST TWO YEARS HE FELT THERE WAS SOME GROUND FOR SATISFACTION AND ENCOURAGEMENT IN THAT GOI HAD IMPROVED ITS RELATIONS WITH US WITHOUT LOSING CONFIDENCE OF SOVIETS, WHICH HE NOTED WAS NO MEAN TRICK. FURTHER, FOR A COUNTRY BESET WITH INTERNAL DIFFICULTIES, DOMESTIC ATTITUDES ON FOREIGN POLICY HAD STABILIZED AND BECOME MORE MATURE AND CURRENTLY INDIA'S FOREIGN POLICY CONTRIBUTED TO WHATEVER SENSE OF SELF-

CONFIDENCE NATION POSSESSED. THIS SALUTORY TREND WAS ALSO EVIDENT IN RELATIONS BETWEEN INDIA AND PAKISTAN. INDIAN PUBLIC OPINION HAD SWUNG AROUND GRADUALLY TO VIEW THAT THERE WAS NOTHING WRONG IN HAVING GOOD RELATIONS WITH PAKISTAN AND SIMILARLY HE FELT PAKISTANIS WERE GRADUALLY COMING AROUND TO SAME POINT OF VIEW REGARDING INDIA. THERE WERE NUMBER OF ENCOURAGING SIGNS OF THIS NATURE AND IF PAKISTAN COULD ONLY RESOLVE SOME OF ITS DOMESTIC POLITICAL PROBLEMS HE WAS HOPEFUL THAT TREND TOWARDS IMPROVED RELATIONS BETWEEN BOTH COUNTRIES WOULD CONTINUE. ALL OF THIS WAS OF COURSE RELEVANT TO AFGHAN DEVELOPMENTS WHICH GAVE SOME URGENCY TO SOLUTION OF PAKISTAN'S INTERNAL PROBLEMS AND MIGHT IN FACT GENERATE SITUATIONS OR PRESSURES WHICH WOULD RESULT IN NEW LOOK BY
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PAKISTAN TOWARDS INDIA.

5. MEHTA STRESSED WHAT HE WAS SAYING WAS HIGHLY SPECULATIVE. SITUATION CREATED BY AFGHAN DEVELOPMENTS WAS VERY COMPLICATED AND PRECIPITOUS CONCLUSIONS OR ACTIONS SHOULD BE AVOIDED. HE EXPRESSED HOPE, HOWEVER, THAT LITTLE BY LITTLE INDIA MIGHT PLAY CONSTRUCTIVE ROLE IN AFGHANISTAN AND EVENTUALLY BE HELPFUL TOWARDS PAKISTAN.

6. I REPORT THIS FOR WHAT IT IS WORTH. NOT HAVING SEEN TRAFFIC FROM ADDRESSEE POSTS, I DO NOT KNOW HOW MUCH OF THIS IS NEW INFORMATION OR USEFUL. FEEL FREE TO USE AS YOU WISH OR FILE AWAY.
HECK UNQUOTE

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NNN

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